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**April 2014**



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## **Rockingham-Strafford County FSA Updates**

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- [Milk Income Loss Contract Program \(MILC\)](#)
- [Farm Bill Website and Online Overview of Farm Bill Programs](#)
- [USDA Enhances Farm Storage Facility Loan Program](#)
- [Sign-Up for Disaster Assistance Programs](#)
- [Attention Farm Loan Borrowers](#)
- [New Farm Bill Offers Increased Opportunities for Producers](#)
- [AskFSA](#)
- [Selected Interest Rates for April](#)
- [Dates to Remember](#)

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### **Rockingham-Strafford County FSA Office**

629 Calef Highway  
Epping, NH 03042  
Monday-Friday  
8:00 AM- 4:30 PM

Phone: 603-679-4656  
Fax: 603-679-4658

**County Executive Director:**  
Carol Sargent  
[carol.sargent@nh.usda.gov](mailto:carol.sargent@nh.usda.gov)

**County Committee:**  
Richard Babcock, Chair  
Judith Merrill, Vice-Chair  
Mary Current, Member  
Daniel Hicks III, Member  
Glenn Pierce, Member

### **Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC)**

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced the extension of the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program which protects dairy farmers against income loss through Sept. 1, 2014, or until a new Margin Protection Program for dairy producers (MPP) is operational.

Contracts for eligible producers enrolled in MILC on or before Sept. 30, 2013, are automatically extended until the termination date of the MILC program. Dairy operations with approved MILC contracts will continue to receive monthly payments if a payment rate is in effect.

Since MILC payments are limited to a maximum amount of milk production each fiscal year, dairy operations may select a production start month other than October 2013 (the start of fiscal year 2014). Producers who want to select a different production start month must visit their FSA office between April 14, 2014, and May 30, 2014.

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### **Farm Bill Website and Online Overview of**

**County Committee**

**Meeting:** April 21, 2014 @  
12:30 PM

**Acting Farm Loan Manager:**

Brian Kuper

Phone: 603-223-6003

[brian.kuper@vt.usda.gov](mailto:brian.kuper@vt.usda.gov)

**Farm Loan Officers:**

Rebecca Davis

Lorna Wakefield

William Wilson

## Farm Bill Programs

The 2014 Farm Bill was signed by President Obama on Feb. 7, 2014.

The new Farm Bill repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by FSA. Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit the website: [www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill). For an overview of FSA programs please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?

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## USDA Enhances Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

The enhanced program includes 23 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers, and makes it easier for farmers to finance the equipment they need to grow and expand. This is part of a broader effort to help small and mid-sized farmers.

Producers with small and mid-sized operations, and specialty crop fruit and vegetable growers, now have access to capital for supplies including sorting bins, wash stations and other food safety related equipment. A new more flexible alternative is also provided for determining storage needs for fruit and vegetable producers, and waivers are available on a case-by-case basis for disaster assistance or insurance coverage if available products are not relevant or feasible for a particular producer.

The low-interest funds can be used to build or upgrade permanent facilities to store commodities. Eligible commodities include grains, oilseeds, peanuts, pulse crops, hay, honey, renewable biomass commodities, fruits and vegetables. Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for fruits and vegetables.

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## Sign-Up for Disaster Assistance Programs

Enrollment begins April 15th for producers with losses covered by the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) and the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) will provide payments to eligible producers for livestock deaths and grazing losses that have occurred since the expiration of the livestock disaster assistance programs in 2011, and including calendar years 2012, 2013, and 2014.

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather. Eligible livestock includes beef cattle, dairy cattle, bison, poultry, sheep, swine, horses, and other livestock as determined by the Secretary.

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire on publicly managed land. An eligible livestock producer must own, cash lease, or be a contract grower of eligible livestock during the 60 calendar days before the beginning date of the qualifying drought or fire in a county that is rated by the U.S. Drought Monitor as D2, D3, or D4.

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture.

TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters.

To expedite applications, all producers who experienced losses are encouraged to collect records documenting losses in preparation for enrollment in these disaster assistance programs.

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## Attention Farm Loan Borrowers

There is a new state statute requiring the name on your photo identification (e.g., driver's license) match with the name used to file a Uniform Commercial Code (UCC). This UCC is put into place when you request a loan from FSA and is renewed every 5 years. The UCC is a blanket lien taken against your chattels, equipment, etc. that you may have pledged for security.

If you are a borrower, the NH FSA Farm Loan Office is requesting that you send a copy of your photo identification to their office in Concord. Please mail a copy to: USDA/FSA, 10 Ferry St., Suite 212, Concord, NH 03301. If it is more convenient, you may stop by your local Farm Service Agency County Office. County Office Staff can copy your license and send directly to the Concord Office for you. You can also scan and fax a copy of your license to: 603-223-6030 or email the scanned document to [sandra.carter@nh.usda.gov](mailto:sandra.carter@nh.usda.gov).

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## New Farm Bill Offers Increased Opportunities for Producers

The 2014 Farm Bill offers increased opportunities for producers including farm loan program modifications that create flexibility for new and existing farmers.

The Farm Bill expands lending opportunities for thousands of farmers and ranchers to begin and continue operations, including greater flexibility in determining eligibility, raising loan limits, and emphasizing beginning and socially disadvantaged producers. Changes that will take effect immediately include:

- Elimination of loan term limits for guaranteed operating loans.

- Modification of the definition of beginning farmer, using the average farm size for the county as a qualifier instead of median farm size.

- Modification of the Joint Financing Direct Farm Ownership Interest Rate to 2 percent less than regular Direct Farm Ownership rate, with a floor of 2.5 percent. Previously, the rate was established at 5 percent.

- Increase of the maximum loan amount for Direct Farm Ownership down payments from \$225,000 to \$300,000.

- Elimination for rural residency requirement for Youth Loans, allowing urban youth to benefit.

- Debt forgiveness on Youth Loans, which will not prevent borrowers from obtaining additional loans from the federal government.

- Increase of the guarantee amount on Conservation Loans from 75 to 80 percent and 90 percent for socially disadvantaged borrowers and beginning farmers.

- Microloans will not count toward loan term limits for veterans and beginning farmers.

Additional modifications must be implemented through the rulemaking processes. Visit the FSA Farm Bill website for detailed information and updates to Farm Loan Programs.

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## AskFSA

In a commitment to continually improve customer service and respond to customer inquiries about FSA programs, customers can now access AskFSA, an online service portal to find information and answers to questions. By going to [askfsa.custhelp.com](http://askfsa.custhelp.com) you can:

- Access our knowledge base 24/7
- Receive answers to your questions faster
- Submit a question and receive a timely response from FSA experts
- Get notifications when answers important to you and your farming operation are updated
- Customize your account settings and view responses

This resource is for ALL customers, including underserved farmers who wish to be enrolled in FSA loans, farm and conservation programs.

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## Selected Interest Rates for April

- Farm Operating Loans, Direct including Microloans 2.00%
- Farm Ownership Loans 4.00%
- Farm Ownership Loans, Down Payment 1.50%
- Emergency Loans 3.00%
- Farm Storage Facility Loans, 7 yrs. 2.125%

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## Dates to Remember

- April 14: May 30: MILC Start Month Changes
- April 15: Enrollment for Disaster Programs Begins
- April 21: County Committee Meeting

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).